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A
S E R M O N

CONCERNING

Zeal for Religion,

Consistent with Moderation.

Preached at *EDENBURGH*

On Sunday the 27th of *April*, 1690.

BEFORE

The Lord High Commissioner,
and the States of PARLIAMENT
of SCOTLAND.

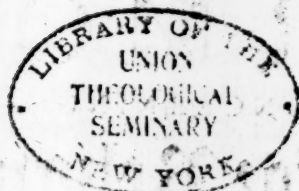
BY

Mr. GEORGE MELDRUM,

A Presbyterian Minister, and till of late one of the
Episcopal Clergy of that Kingdom.

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Advertisement.

THE Reverend Author of the following Discourse, is so well known in his Country for his Learning and Piety, that there needs no Character of mine to Recommend his Sermon. Only I think fit to acquaint the English Reader, that he was Minister at Aberdeen, under the Episcopal Clergy, till within these few years, and that he left that Party upon the account of some Scruples, wherewith he has sufficiently acquainted the World upon several Occasions since.

P S A L M

11. 10. 1954

PSALM 137, ver: 5, 6.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget
her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, Let my tongue cleave to the
roof of my mouth !

The words of the Text follows.

If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

THIS Psalm seems to have been penned by some of the Priests, or the Levitical Singers, in the time of the *Babylonish Captivity*, it being their Office to sing Psalms, and Songs of praise unto God with the voice, and to play on Instruments of Musick, to his praise, as ye will see it, 1 *Cron.* 25, and something like this of Singing, and using of Harps you have here in the 2, and 3. verses of this Psalm.

In the first six Verses, you have an account, of the condition and state, they, and the people of God were in, at this time, and how they were affected therewith ; Where were they ? in *Babylon*, and Captivity there : and as in the first verse, *Sitting by the rivers of Caldea*, where there were many, *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down* ; and how are they affected ? why, *they weeped*. and this grief was not so much, for their own privat particular distress, as on the account of the desolation of the Church, and of the ruine of the State ; It was, *when they remembred Zion*, in the first verse, and *remembered Jerusalem* in the 5, and 6 verses. Yea, so much were they taken up with this, That when they that had carried them away captives, desired them to sing the songs which they used to sing in their own Land, (whether in mockage, or out of curiosity,

I shall not debate) Yet those persons, could not admit a thought of joyful songs, in a time, when *Jerusalem* and *Zion* was in such distress: They had such an abhorrence, at any thing like mirth at such a time, that they ingenuously, and with great seriousness profess, That ere they forget *Jerusalem* with its distress, they would rather chuse never to sing with their Tongue, or play with their hand while they live, *Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and my right hand forget her cunning*: Yea so much are they taken up with the welfare of *Jerusalem* and *Zion*, if it did not fare well with *Jerusalem*, they valued no joy, they rather wish such things to themselves, ere they forget her, whose welfare they count above their chief joy; *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy*. These last words of *verse 6*, which I have chosen, for the ground of my following Exhortation, they describe to us, the disposition and temper of a gracious heart, what is that? They prefer the publick good, the welfare of Church and State, above their own Interest, *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy*, let me never have skill or ability to sing or play any more.

These words will be plain, if I shew you what is meant by *Jerusalem*; and what by preferring *Jerusalem* to our chief Joy. And how shall we better understand what is meant by *Jerusalem*, than by a reflection on *Psalms 122*, where there is a description of this *Jerusalem*, there is the House of the Lord, *verse 1, 9*. The place whither the Tribes go up, to the Testimony of *Israel*, *verse 4*. It is then the place of the Publick Worship. *Jerusalem* is also the place, where the Thrones of Judgment are set, even the Thrones of the House of David, *verse 5*. The Seat of publick Justice, Therefore, I may well conclude, that by *Jerusalem* is meant here, both Church and State; the Church of God where is his Worship, and State where Justice is administrat; this is it's meant here by *Jerusalem*, if I prefer not the welfare of *Jerusalem*, i. e. of the Church and State, above my chief joy; in the Hebrew it is, *the head of my joy*, the highest and chiefest of my joy and comfort, of all my private concerns and comforts, if I prefer not the publick good of Church and State, to the chiefest of these, let me never have any comfortable day any more.

From this we may learn and observe, That it is the duty of all, and will be the practice of every good man, to prefer the publick good and welfare of Church and State, to their own private Interest, even to the highest of their private Comforts. Behold the frame of the People of God in the Text, *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy*,

joy, then let my right hand forget her cunning. Ere we do any thing that looks not like a preferring of Jerusalem, to all our own privat concerns and comforts, we rather with we never have a joyful or merry day after, *If we prefer not Jerusalem above our chief joy*, see this enjoyned and practised. *Psal. 122. ver. 6, 7. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, let them prosper that love thee, for my brethrens sake, I will now say, peace be within thee.* Joel 2. 17. *Let the Priests, the Lord's Ministers, weep betwixt the Porch and the Altar, and say, Spare thy People, and give not thy Heritage to a Reproach.* And Jer. 51. 50. *Remember its state; we will find this temper, and disposition of heart, has possesst the Saints of God in all Ages; what an eminent height of it was in Moses, Exod. 32. 11, 12, 31, 32. after the sin of the golden Calf, when the Lord threatens to destroy the People, on that account, how pleads he? Lord, remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Egyptians will say, thou hast brought them out for a mischief, pardon this people, if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou hast written.* What a height of a publick spirit was this? and *Nebemiab*, though he had all the Honour and Comforts the Court could afford, *Neb. chap. i.* Yet he fasted and weeped, and took no comfort, so long as *Jerusalem's* walls lay in rubbish, so much did this affect his heart, that the King could not but discern it in his Countenance; why art thou sad, said he? And here is the cause, (says he) *The place of my Father's Sepulchre, and the City of Jerusalem lies on heaps; See it also in Jer. chap. 9. at the beginning, O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.* And what a height of this frame was in the holy Apostle Paul, *Rom. 9. 1. I could even be content to be accursed from Christ for my kinsmen according to the flesh.* Time would fail me, to tell you of *Jeshua, Uriah and David*, and of *Daniel*, of *Mordecai*, and *Esther*, and others of the Saints in former times; but if we would search the Scriptures, every-where we will find that the condition of Religion, of the Church of God and their Country, lay nearer the Saints hearts, than their own particular. Their hearts trembled when it was in danger; when it is reproached it is a burden to them. If it be in distress, they mourn; they mourn for *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, *Isai. 66. 10. Rejoyce for Jerusalem, all ye that mourn for her.* *1 Sam. 4. 13. Eli's heart trembled for the Ark of God.* *Zeph. iii. 18. The reproach of her was a burden.* And, when in distress, how fervent in Prayer are they? *Psal. 14. 7. O that the*

salvation of God were come out of Zion, when the Lord bringeth back the Captivity of his People, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. And Psal. 51. ver. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion, and build up the walls of Jerusalem. Psal. 25. 22. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. And how restless are they in this? *Isa. 62. 1. 6, 7.* They will give him no rest till he establish Jerusalem, and make it a praise in the Earth. So you see the truth of the Doctrine, and there is good reason for it.

First, The Honour of God is concerned in it, more than any particular, and this is the great thing lyes near every good man's heart, God's Honour. What wilt thou do to thy great Name? How are they troubled in their hearts when the Name of God is reproached?

Secondly, Every particular person, is but a Member of the Society of Church and State, and the part is for the whole, and what is for the good of the Society, their good is wrapt up in it; they should mind the good of the whole, more than their own private concern; hence the Spirit resembles the Church to a Body, *Rom. 12. and 1 Cor. ch. 12. Eph. 4.* shewing, if one Member suffer, all the rest suffer with it; so that all is for the Bodies good, and all Gifts are given for the advancing and edifying of the Body, we live not to our selves, neither dye we to our selves, but for God, and serving him in the publick Good; this much for the proof of the Doctrine.

For Application, I might, first, Take occasion to lament how little of this publick Spirit is to be seen among us? Ah! ah! there is matter to renew that old Complaint, *All seek their own things, but few the things of Christ*, *Phil. 2. 21.* Which is contrair to that Precept, *1 Cor. 10. 14. Seek not every one their own things, but every one the things of another.* Alas! too many like that old fat Monk, of whom it is storied, that stroaking down his Breast and his Belly, said, *Modo bic sit bene*, providing it be well with himself, cared little how the World went about him; so many care little how it go with Church or State, if it go well with their own particular: O! but this argues a sordid frame of heart, that if it go well with themselves, and they prosper, they care little how it goes with others about them. Alas! what a shameful sin is this, and a cause of much sin and wo, and a sin that seminally and casually contains most of other sins; let us be humbled for it, and afterward beware of this, and that shall be the

2. *Use of Exhortation*, and here I would with all possible seriousness commend two things to you. 1. Beware of a narrow selfish Disposition. 2. I commend unto you, to labour for a Publick frame of Spirit, that like these in the Text, ye may prefer *Jerusalem* above your chief Joy. 1. Then beware of a selfish Disposition, that Self be neither your Principle nor End, I the rather urge this with Earnestness, because, first, I see this a very common Sin, and yet a Sin we are hardly convinced of. *First*, Selfishness is the most common sin in the World, look either to Church or State, to Magistrates or Ministers, to High or to Low, ye may discover much of the prevalent influence of Selfishness. This is matter of Lamentation, yea, I think it is a sad truth, that every Man and Woman among us, now since the Fall, is born with a selfish inclination, and are not easily convinced of the sinfulness of it. Because God hath made Man with a natural love to self, and made it as a fundamental Principle and Law of Nature; therefore it is hard to make us sensible; when this Love gets out of due subordination to the Love of God, and out of that due correlation, to that Love we ought to have to our Neighbour as ourselves. This makes us we are not easily convinced of it, and so hardly recovered from it. Some are so intent on Gain and enlarging their Estates, without regard to Justice or Charity, as if their desire were, that they may place themselves alone on the Earth, *Isa.* 5. 8. Others so intent on their Honour, and Rising in the World, that they care not though they rise by the Blood and Ruine of them that stand in their way; yea, such is the Deceit of mens hearts in this matter, men may pretend the publick Good, when Self is at the bottom of all. Some will pretend they are for Peace, Order, and Publick Good, when it is that they and theirs may possess the fat Benefices of the Church or State. Sometimes Men may pretend to the Reforming of Abuses, rectifying or preventing Disorders, when Envy and Discontent, the casting down others, and raising up themselves acteth them, yea, the Honour of God may be pretended, when the exalting ourselves and our own Party is designed: Yea, Ministers, if they watch not, may be led to pray for self, and preach for self. This then being so common a sin, how much need is there, to stir up all of you, to watch against a selfish disposition.

Secondly, I would the rather call to this, because, as it is a common, so it is a great and grievous sin, a Mother-sin; I may say a selfish Disposition is much of the cause of all the sin in the world, it is directly opposite

opposite to the love of God above all, and to the love of our Neighbour as our selves, which is the sum of the Law. A man that is selfish, can with no sincerity pray, *Thy Will be done, thy Kingdom come*, for he exalts his own Interest more than Gods, and his own Will above and against Gods: And this is the cause of much iniquity in the world, and this being so great a sin, and a Mother-sin, O hate it, and beware of it!

Thirdly, This surely is a hurtful evil, hurtful to others, and hurtful to our selves, it is an Enemy to all Societies being contrair to the end of Society, to wit, the common Good, for it seeks mens private good, above the common Good. And as it divideth Interests, so it divideth Affections, and makes Divisions in the Church and State; this is contrair to the disposition and temper that should be in the Members of a Society, who should be all animat by a common Spirit. There can be no promoting of publick Ends by a privat selfish Spirit. We cannot promot the publick Good without a publick Spirit. This is it which divideth all Societies; this occasions all Jealousies between King and People, all Emulation between Neighbour and Neighbour; this occasions division in the State, and Schism in the Church, this is a great cause of War and Confusion, Fraud and Oppression, and what a world of mischief would selfishness do, if Grace and Divine Providence did not put a stop to it?

Fourthly, It is hurtful to our selves, men lose themselves, by seeking themselves, with the neglect of the common good. Men by their selfishness, they certainly lose not only the peace of their own mind, which they might have by doing good, and aiming at the publick good, but set all others against them; and when they divide Interests from all men, all men divide Interests from them, for this is their Principle, that neglect of the Publick, is the way to be best preserved, and the great safety of their own particular. This is the sure way foolishly to ruine all; as if when a House is in Fire, a Man should think it enough it has not seized yet on my Chamber; or when a Ship is sinking to look only to our own Cabin and Goods, without care to stop the common Leak: O let me beseech you to beware of this.

Secondly, Let me beseech you (dearly Beloved) labour for a Publick frame of Spirit, O imitat these Worthies in the Text, prefer *Jerusalem* to your chief Joy, in your esteem, desire, and endeavour, prefer the publick good of Church and State, above all our privat Concerns, above all your personal and privat Comforts. Is not this a more excellent end, than selfish Interest, even the pleasing and glorifying of God

in the promoting the publick Good? O that I could prevail with you in this, it would surely be your great Advantage, and sure if either ye regard the Honour of God, or your own true Interest, you cannot say me nay; Let me plead with you from these Reasons.

First, The Honour of God is concerned in it. It's more concerned in the publick Good of Church and State, than in your own personal Concern. And O! but the Honour of God lyes nigh to the heart of every one that loveth God; This is the end for which we were made.

Secondly, Mind the publick Good more than your privat Interest, for this makes you like God and your Saviour Jesus Christ. God is always doing Good to the Evil and Unthankful. Christ Jesus from the Womb, to the Grave, by his Dying and Suffering, teaches us this Lesson, even to mind others, and the Publick Good, *He pleased not himself*, Rom. 15. 3. *Let the same Mind be therefore in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no Reputation*, Phil. 2. 5, 7. Who gave himself for the good of others, and humbled himself unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, v. 8.

Thirdly, O! but the Advantage of this would be unspeakable, if all of us were brought to this Temper, to mind the publick Good more than our own. O how amiable a Creature would man be! and what a blessed Condition would the World be in! and all Societies, Kingdoms, Cities, and Churches be in, if Self were denied, and every one minded the common and publick Good, above their own privat and personal Interest! This would prevent neglect of Duties, and doing of hurt to others, there would not be such a thing as Injustice, and uncharitableness among men, Emulation, Strife and Envy; no divided Interest, and so no divided Affection, no division in the State: No Jealousie between the Ruler and Ruled, if this were. If there were complication of Interests, there would be an Union of Affections: As we see in Husband and Wife, in Parents and Children. This were a good Policy in States men, and next to Piety towards God, which leadeth to the uniting People to God, and to favour with him, wherein all our Happiness stands; and indeed what ever the World think of it, it is the greatest Wisdom and Policy. Next I say to this, the greatest point of humane Policy for preservation of Commonwealths and Societies were, that the Governour and Governed have no divided Interest, so that the good or hurt of the one, is the good or hurt of the other, and there is no manner of hope that

that the one of them shall thrive by the ruine of the other. Then they would willingly take one another for better and for worse, to stand and fall together. If the Politicians had the Skill and Will, to make such a complication of Interests, betwixt Sovereign and People, Ruler and Ruled, as the Wellfare and hurt of the one might depend on the Wellfare and hurt of the other, and make it visible that all might understand it; Certainly Kingdoms and Commonwealths, might be Immortal, till either the wrath of an offended God, or the power of a Forraign Enemy should dissolve them, for nothing within would do it, if Self did it not; and Self will not do it where there is such Complication of Interests. O then study to be denied to Self, and to be of a publick frame of Spirit.

Secondly, Consider this would be each one of our particular Advantage, the good of your Families and Posterity depends on the good of the Publick, your own Honour is concerned in this. Will you tell me, which of these two were a more desirable Inscription on a Man's Tomb? *Here lyes a man that for his Selfish ends, did his outmost to ruine both Church and State.* Or, *Here lies a Man that in all his Consultations aimed at the Publick Good:* And beside the Peace, it would minister to mens Consciences in Life and Death, our own temporal Peace and Welfare is wrapped up in the Publick Good. O! be like *Mordecai*. *Ezth.* 10. 3. *seeking always the wealth of his People.* And beware as *Baruch*. *Jer.* 45. 5. *To seek great things for thy self.*

Fourthly, If we neglect the Publick Good for our own particular Concerns, Heathens will rise up in Judgement against us and Condemn us. O what a love to their Country did they shew! I shall but give you two Instances out of *Plutarch*, (see *Plutarch's Politicks*, page 39, 40. in *Ottavo*,) the one is of *Cretinus* the *Magnesian* and *Hermias*, betwixt whom there was great Animosity, but in the time of the *Mithridatick War*, *Cretinus* saies, let *Hermias* have the Government and I shall remove from the City, for I am afraid that Contention destroy the Common-wealth; but if he will not, let him leave the Country and Government; and *Hermias* accepts the Condition, and acknowledgeth that *Certinus* was the more Warlike, and fit for the Government, and so removed himself and his Family. The other instance is of *Timesius Clazomenius*, an excellent man, yet because he did inhance all the Government, he contracted the Envy and Hatred of the People, of which he was ignorant till one day, as he passed by some Children, who had catched a Bird in a Gih,
and

and one of them bruising the Birds Head, crushed its Brains, the rest said to him, we wish thou had so bruised the Head of *Timeſius*: the Children not knowing that *Timeſius* was hearing them; but he hearing them, began to consider in himself whence the hatred of the People had arisen, which was now in the mouths of Children, and finding that his Government was displeasing to them, immediately he packs up all and resolves to leave the City and Country. This saies *Plutarch* is a saying worthy of a noble Mind, *Amo liberos, sed Patriam magis amo.* I say, if we mind not Publick Good, Heathens will rise up against us, and Condemn us. Ye may now ask, How shall we attain to this frame of Spirit? And secondly, What shall we do for the Publick Good? *1st.* What shall I do to attain this publick frame of Spirit, that I may be of a temper, to prefer *Jerusalem* to my chief joy?

First, I beseech you, Sirs, meditate seriously on the Motives, I layed before you, at this time, until you get suitable Affections and Resolutions raised in your Hearts, Consideration is a chief Mean to this.

Secondly, Pray much to God for this Frame; he is the Giver of all good Gifts, he giveth liberally and upbraideth not, *Ja. 1. v. 5, 17.*

Thirdly, Labour for more love to God, and love to your Neighbours; if there were more Catholick Charity, more sincere Love to God above all, and more Charity to our Neighbours, it would make us seek more the Publick Good than our own.

Fourthly, Eye the Example of the Lord Jesus, and his Saints and Servants, *Heb. 12. 1, 2.* Mind these things seriously, and seek of God that he would work them in you.

Next you may ask, What shall we do for the Publick Good? there are some things, that even the meanest, in their most private Capacity may do for the Publick Good; other things more incumbent to the Honourable Members of the High Court of Parliament, that they may do for the publick Good.

First, Some things the meanest in their most private Capacity may do for the publick Good. The meanest of all may, 1. Pray for the Publick, this is our Duty, *Psal. 122. 6.* Pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*, peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces, pray for this; this is it that all may do, and all ought to do, *Isa. 62. 6, 7.* Ye that make mention of the Lord, and are the Lord's remembrancers give him no rest, keep no silence, till he make *Jerusalem* a praise on the earth. It's God only that shakes Kingdoms and Churches, and God only can establish Kingdoms and Churches, and he cannot only Stablish but

make them a Praise again upon the Earth. O seek him that he would settle Church and State again, and seek it importunately, the thing is weighty, and the time dangerous, and give him no rest; he loves a holy Impudence and Importunity in this, *Luke 11.8.*

2. I recommend to you, Labour to be at Peace with God, or else your Prayers will come no speed, *Job. 22. 21.* Acquaint thy self with God, and be at Peace, and so shall good come unto thee: O! Peace with God quiets all; *Tranquillus Dei tranquillat omnia.* *Job. 34. 29.* If he give quietness, who then can make trouble? O therefore make Peace with God! This all of us should endeavour after.

3. I recommend to you for the publick Good, Turn away every one of you from that which may obstruct the publick Good, every one of you adds Fuel to the Fire, to the common Fire. Remember, to turn from your Provocations; *Your Iniquities separate between you and your God, your sins hide his face from you.* *Isai. 59. 2.* Your Iniquities turns away good things from you. *Jer. 5. 25.* Therefore turn every one of you from the evil of your way; away with Pride and Vanity, away with Unrighteousness and Ungodliness; away with Filthiness and Drunkenness, with Injustice and Oppression, and so Iniquity shall not be your ruine.

4. I beseech these in the most private Capacity, Labour what ye can to get these things that contribute for the Establishing and Settlement of Church and State; And what is that? even Righteousness and Holiness: *Prov. 14. 34.* Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a reproach to any people. Holiness, Mercy, and Truth, Righteousness and Meekness, Love, Charity and Justice. *Isai. 33. 6.* Wisdom and strength is the stability of thy times; and these are the things that tends to publick Good, and therefore seek after them; and above all these things, put on Charity which is the Bond of Perfection, *Col. 3. 14.* Follow Peace, and love all men, especially these of the Household of Faith.

Now these things, Persons in the meanest Capacity may do. And I would humbly offer, in the next place, some Things to the Honourable Members of the High Court of Parliament, as more especially incumbent to them, in such a Case as this. And if any should ask, Who are you that should give Advice to so high and honourable a Court? I humbly acknowledge my own meanness and unfitness for this Work, and would gladly have declined it if I could, but whatever my meanness be, I am a Servant of a great Master; before whom the greatest on Earth are but as Grasshoppers; and if I have

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Warrant from him to speak, I must not forbear, for fear of you least he confound me before you, but I hope, I shall deliver nothing, but what is agreeable to his Word, and with all due Humility.

And first, I recommend to you to be at Peace among your selves, and study to unite in sincere Aims and Endeavours, for the publick Good of Church and State. This is the great thing needful in this matter. It is storied of *Themistocles* and *Aristides* the *Athenians*, when sent upon a publick Work, they agreed well, notwithstanding of any private Animosity that was betwixt them. Come, says *Aristides*, let us lay aside our Differences, and leave them upon the Borders of the *Athenians*, tho' we should be necessitat to take them up again when the Work is done. O lay aside Differences, and remember our Saviour's word, *Matth. 12. 25.* Every Kingdom divided against it self, shall be brought to Desolation; this is your Adversaries great Strength, therefore take heed of this; I think *Protestants*, when Difference grows, should be jealous, lest the Church of *Rome* have a Hand in this Matter, for *Divide & Impera*, is her Maxime. But surely to unite in Common Good, is the great Duty of all.

The second thing I recommend to you. O study by your Example and Authority, to Disgrace and Suppress all Debauchery and Impiety in the Country and Armies, remember that Word, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* Him that honoureth me I will honour, and he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed. Remember it, it's not enough to profess a Zeal against Arbitrariness in the State, or Popery in the Church; if we continue by Debauchery and Impiety to prophane our Holy Religion; this is no less offensive to God than Popery; God expects from us Reformation of our Hearts and Lives, that as we profess a more Holy Religion than others, so we may lead more holy Lives, else we cannot expect God will be with us; but our Sins will provoke God to repent of the Good he thought to have to done, and to return to do us evil after he has done us good, *Jer. 18. 10.* and *Josh. 23. 15.* our Sin will be the greater, and the Judgment the more heavy, that it is after so wonderful a Revelation: And no Wisdom or Strength will keep off Wrath, if we go on in Sin; *Ezra 9. 14.* And there is nothing feareth me more than that. Alas, we are not reformed and become better, by all that God hath done; *Isai. 9. 13, 14.* Bestir your selves, noble Patriots; O study by your own Example to disgrace the hateful Sins of Cursing and Swearing, of Filthiness and Drunkenness, of Pride and

of Oppression, and all Injustice, and endeavour to suppress these and such like Sins, as by a due Execution of Laws made, so by a supply where there is any defect of such wholesome Laws. And I wish a due care may be taken to suppress Debauchery in the Army. It is a common regrave that too many in it, I speak not of all, I know the contrary of some, but too many neither fear God nor regard Man. There is indeed to look to it, that they be Men of Skill and Fidelity, and not Impious, for how can they be true to Man, who have no fear of God, the Debaucheries of some, and the Irregularities of others, doth much prejudice to the common Cause, and both ought to be restrained. Certainly it is a shame for those, who stand up for a holy Religion, to be leading filthy lives, Cursing and Damning on the Streets, Drinking and Debauching, &c. I beseech you restrain these. Surely at such a time, there is need both People and Souldiers mind that word, *Deut. 23. 9, 14. When the host goeth forth against the enemy, then keep thee far from every wicked thing, for the Lord thy God is among you: and if he see any unclean thing among you, he will leave you to fall before your Enemies; this holy care were the way to Victory and Peace. Psal. 81. 13. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways. I should have soon subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves to him, but for them they should have remained for ever.*

Thirdly, I would humbly offer this as my advice, go forward zealously, in settling the Government of the Church of Christ, according to his own appointment. This is a choice mean to promote Piety, and to suppress Sin. I recommend to you that word of *Artaxerxes, Ezra. 7. 23. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be done diligently for the House of the God of Heaven, for why should wrath come from the God of Heaven upon the Realm of the King and his Sons.* I cannot but commend you, and bless the Lord, that with so much Unity and Harmony you have gone some footsteps already, go on, and the Lord be with you, and let none give way to these prejudices, wherewith some endeavour to possess mens minds against Presbyterial Government, as an intollerable yoke and rigid, as some Pamphlets now passing would represent it; for if you give way to such, ye may cast at the Christian Religion ere long, for it hath been evil spoken of by the Adversaries; and tho there ought to be a due Zeal against Error and Vice, yet I am confident there shall be that due moderation, which the Gospel prescribes, used toward all that are Pious and Orthodox

Orthodox, that shall be satisfying and pleading to every one that loveth truth and holiness: Neither, I beseech you, impute the irregular Practices of some unto the Principles of the whole Party, for these things we do disown. I am sorry for the Sufferings of any, but if any had designed a representation of their Suffering, I wish it had wanted that Gall and Venome against the Civil Government, wherewith some Pamphlets are filled, and that there had been more Candor, Ingenuity, and Honesty; used in relating matters of Fact, the want of which perhaps may occasion such a search as may discover, that the Sufferings of some, has been rather the effect of their own scandalous sins, than of others hands. And tho' I have a great Charity to all that are pious and sound in the Principal Doctrines of the Faith, tho' they differ in lesser things; yet I must crave leave freely to profess, before this great Auditory, that ere I did intrude my self, or consent to be obruded on an unwilling People (as it was in most places of the West) I had rather beg my Fraught to have carried me over to *America*, to preach to a willing People: And it is an old Canon in the Church, *Nemo invitus obrudatur*.

4. As I beseech you to advance Holiness toward God, so endeavour to promote Righteousness toward Man, that in all Courts of Judicature, there may be such Judges as are mentioned, *Exod. 18. 21. Men fearing God, loving truth, and bating covetousness; and charge them, as Deut. 1. 16, 17. That such judge righteously between man and man, and have no respect of persons in judgment, for they judge for the Lord.* And provide, as much as in you lyeth, that there be no partiality, nor perverting, nor delay of Justice, but that Judgment may run down like a Stream, and Righteousness like a mighty River.

5. I humbly beseech you of that Honourable Court, consider what you may do for the Peace and Safety of the Country; its Case may be better known to many of you, than to me; yet I must crave leave to represent unto you the Case, especially of some Northern parts; some are ravaged and spoiled with some barbarous Highlanders, and others burdened with Free-quarter, for want of the pay of the Army, and the Cries of the Poor cry for your pity, and call for your speedy help. Ye that settled the Government, will ye not uphold it? and study the safety of the Country under it? If this Ruine fall under your hand, it may ruine Posterity, ruine Religion, and prove a great grief of heart to you, that are wanting of doing your duty,

while

while it is in the power of your hand to do it, Eccl. 9. 10. I presume not to prescribe Methods to you, but humbly plead the Cause of the Distress, and that ye would consider the Danger we are in.

6. I recommend to you the Care of the Education of Youth, the Visiting and Reforming of Schools and Colledges, and the Case of the Children of some Great Ones now abroad, at Popish Schools. It may be worth your Consideration, what may be done, to recover and reduce them, and to prevent the like in time coming.

And lastly, Study to promote Peace in the Nation, of Unity among your selves, and Charity among all: Mind these things seriously; and with these two Qualifications I leave them.

1. What ye do in these things, do it sincerely, from right Principles, as ye would approve your selves to God; for tho' ye do good, if ye do it not in a right manner, you lose your reward of him. Ezra 4. 2. I read of some, when the People were going to build the Temple, said, *Come, let us build with you*, and yet designed but to mar the work; God forbid that there be any such among you.

2. Time is precious, and what ye do, do diligently and without delay, Eccl. 9. 10. *Do it with all your might*: Remember you must be Accountable ere long to God for every Opportunity put in your Hand: Not only will God reckon with you for the evil you do, but for the Good ye might have done, and did it not; And therefore as ye would not have grief in your Heart, for neglect of it, at Death and Judgment, improve Seasons and Opportunities for doing good. I leave one Word with you, Esth. 4. 13, 14. It is Mordecai's word to Esther, *Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thy self, thou shalt escape in the King's House, more than all the Jews; for if thou altogether hold thy Peace at this time, then shall their Enlargement and Deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy fathers house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth, whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this.* God bless what hath been spoken, and to Him be Glory for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.

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